643 The extent of this authority, such as it is, is most ill-defined. It does
631 not clearly and definitely extend beyond the central group of the Kamarakotos and even here many of the Indians never have practical occasion to recognize it, although none would deny it. The Kamarakotos and Kamarakoto-like Indians of the Caroní and other more remote parts are aware of the cacique only when they have occasion to visit the central group. They appear to have no cacique of their own and those that did visit the central group during our stay verbally recognized the authority of this cacique. He submits that his authority does extend widely into this outer region (with which he himself was almost entirely unacquainted until our visit) but in fact his power there is not even nominal. Even in this extremely attenuated way, it is completely false to speak of him as in authority over all the Arekunas, including those of the Gran Sabana and the Taurepánes, although this was claimed for him. The Arekunas as a whole do not have any one chief, and many of them acknowledge no authority
[619] outside their own settlements. It would be improper to speak of an Arekuna tribe, since the Arekunas are not an integrated unit, either ethnically or politically, but an agglomeration of small, physically and culturally related but quite distant groups.

562 Schomburgk speaks of (uncommon) cases of female chiefs among the
622 Makuchi. Among the Kamarakotos no woman is ever a chief, either over a
643 household or over a larger group, although otherwise women are by no means
171 treated as inferior beings.

Relationship Concepts

602 As with many primitive peoples, concepts of family relationships in Ka-
601 marakoto are more complex than in nations of European origin, are more spe-
114 cific, and rest on a different basis. Most vocabularies, including even the unusually fine Taurepán vocabulary of Koch-Grünberg, give an imperfect idea of these relationships. This is usually because the investigator tends to seek the Indian equivalents of the words of his own language, a system adequate for obtaining names of objects and for many other purposes but quite inadequate when, as with relationships, the concepts expressed in the two languages are
[128] far from being the same. The following carefully checked information was obtained in several different interviews by postulating many different sorts of family groups and asking what each individual in the group would call each other
[128] individually. This is a field in which an outside investigator could probably never achieve absolutely complete knowledge, at least not without many years of actual membership in the tribe, but the following account is believed to be nearly complete and essentially correct. Comparisons are made chiefly with

Marriage

58
178 Like some other customs, marriage among the Kamarakotos seems to be in course of modification in two directions: by the simplification or omission of old elements, social custom once having been both more complex and more rigid than it is now, and by a tendency, encouraged by the more "progressive" men, to approximate Venezuelan customs as far as these are known. Neither of these trends is, however, as yet strong enough markedly to have modified Kamarakoto society. Thus there is a definite feeling that polygamy and what are, by other standards, incestuous unions are not to be encouraged, but both are still common, and, as illustrating the other trend, bride-purchase as an essential requisite has been abandoned, but clear vestiges of it survive.

585 Marriage in a Venezuelan legal sense is, of course, non-existent. There is no authority or register for civil marriage and no priest for religious marriage.
581 Nevertheless it is proper to speak of marriage and not, as a somewhat stiff-spined student in British Guiana has done, merely of "the cohabitation of male
[588] and female." More casual cohabitation certainly occurs but it is clearly distinguished, even by the Indians, from marriage, a union which is by intention permanent and in which the social and economic considerations are at least as strong as the sexual. The fact that the ceremonies and formalities in vogue in civilized communities are omitted does not alter the fact that this is true marriage in all proper senses of the word.

584 The initiative in marriage may be taken by any of the parties concerned, the man, the woman, and the woman's parents. The man's parents are apparently not considered to be interested parties. Marriage does not take place without consent of the bride and normally the consent of her parents, or at least
583 of her mother, is likewise required. Presents may be given to the bride's parents,
584 and especially to her mother, by the prospective groom, but I was assured that this is by way of persuasion and to promote good feeling and not a prerequisite
[179] to the obtaining of the woman. Nevertheless, this probably is a vestige of the formerly widespread, probably universal, custom of bride-purchase. The purchase commonly took the form of personal service to the bride's father, and a typical example of this occurs in the Kamarakoto legend of Maichak, but this custom has largely been dropped. The groom, naturally well disposed toward the bride's parents, may voluntarily assist them but is never, I was told, obliged
[562] to do so. The repeated emphasis on the bride's mother, rather than her father, is also peculiar and is significant of the relatively high status of women in the tribe.

585 There are no ceremonies or formalities of any sort. When the parties are agreed, the bride and groom simply start living together.

595 The Kamarakotos are polygamous, that is, polygynous. There was some
177 reticence in supplying information as to numbers of wives, an indication of

291 127. Even if we agree, as I do not, that the Caribs wore no clothing
177 whatever before contact with Europeans. Alejo's date is too late by a century
[114] or two and it is virtually impossible that any authentic tribal memory is as old as that.

[123] 128. The women would never visit us except in dresses — I shall show
[562] on a later page that this was because of pride, fashion and authority, and not because of personal modesty or fear. They either stayed at home in the remoter places that we did not visit, or borrowed dresses for the occasion. The men wore trousers if they could, but had no hesitation in visiting us without them.

129. But by the time we left, the cacique was more conventionally clothed than we were and would have excited no comment on any city street. No other Indian achieved quite this degree of sartorial splendor.

130. Our party did supply them with some ready-made dresses, but this is a momentary phase. The women of the tribe as a whole are adopting and will soon universally wear the homemade costume described.

294 131. This and the following paragraph are by my wife, Dr. Anne Roe.
114

171 132. In fact many culture traits common to these Indians and the civilized part of Venezuela are not evidence of Venezuelan influence on the Indians but of the reverse.

291 133. except one Taurepán mosa that was not made for use but as a curio
126 for a missionary, who supplied the heads. Very misleading data are sometimes
128 given by such made-to-order specimens and I may emphasize here that I have described nothing that was not seen actually in use by the Indians and collected nothing but used objects or, when this was impossible, new ones made for use and carefully compared with those that had been used. In the field of their special skills, notably basketry, the Indians can and will supply almost anything that a collector wants, but if he describes what he wishes and has it made to order, the result is likely to be definitely non-Indian in form and design.

114 134. If I understand Roth correctly (this passage is not entirely clear to
301 me), he considers the belief that these bands permanently groove the limbs
304 "ridiculous" and "physiologically impossible" "delusions." Nevertheless it is a fact, fully proven by the plainly visible effects of the bands even when the bands themselves have been removed.